

Who is Leon Tutundjian?

The Tutundjians were great traders of tobacco and they have taken their names from their business, which in old time was in our custom. —

Leon Tutundjian's father's grand father Hadji Bedros was the owner of 16 tobacco trading monopolies out of 36 which existed in Turkey.

He had established several tobacco centers in Samson, Drebizond, Kavala & Istamboul. The principal trading office center was in Istamboul, from where Hadji Bedros use to manage his business. It is noticeable, that in Kavala, Mohamed Ali, was an employee at the Tutundjian's office, who afterwards by the grace of prodigious works and the victories which he carried over the Memlukes in Egypt, was going to receive the title of vice-roy and was to be called The big Reformer.

Leon Tutundjian's father Rouben Tutundjian was born in Stamboul at 1846. He had done his high studies at Stamboul in the School of laws, and had been graduated from it at 1876; was presented with other 16 Armenians students as the first crop of the University;

Full of patriotical fire, and a lover of history & philology, Rouben Tutundjian at his leisure hours has composed patriotic dramas of which "Queen Zabel" which in 1875. was performed by the actress Arousiag & Bedros Aghamanean at the theater of Kadikoy. In 1880 he has written a novel "Satenig - Dstad" taken from the Armenian

SOURCE TO BE IDENTIFIED

LOCATION TO BE IDENTIFIED

Collection Christian

Daily?

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5<sup>th</sup> JUBILEE OF LEVON TUTUNDJIAN DE VARTANIAN



... of Constantinople. He has also an inedit work, "The biography of Khodja Yacoub Amira." Profoundly absorbed by patriotism, Rouben Tutundjian's greatest wish has been that, his only son Leon Tutundjian should follow his career & consecrate himself to the cultural life. This devout, just & experimanted lawyer died in 1917 January 7. at the Armenian national Hospital in Constantinople.

Leon Tutundjian son of Rouben & Makrouhi Chahnazarian was born in Constantinople's suburb Kadi Hagh in 1892 December 24. He has done his secondary studies at Venice congregation school of Macedoni. Afterwards he has continued his studies at the school of laws of Constantinople, of which he has been graduated in 1914. At the outbreak of the first world war, when Turkey declared war against the Allies & became Germany's Ally; he was attending the military Academia of Constantinople, which had been transformed into the reservist officer's school. At that time the Turkish government was disarming all the Armenian soldiers from the Turkish Army, and was organizing of them the Labour-group, which was called "Ameli Tabour", which in the futur, they were all perished under severe & horrible circumstances. Rouben Tutundjian owing to his career, was well aware of the Turkish psychology, guessing the outbreacking tragedy, decided not to let his only son to go to the front; he found a way to send him out of the country. Meanwhile Leon's mother died in 1914 May, and his father had a stroke. Leon Tutundjian after an adventurous & dangerous trip Arrived in Bulgaria at Burgaz harbour.

Here already news were running that British & French fleet are bombarding Dardanel, and that British troops were landing at Galipoli island. This was taking place in 1915 February; The Turks terrified, were preparing to transfer Sultan Mehmed Rashad and the government to Bursa. Unfortunately the enterprise of the Allies turned down sinister. It was at that time the diabolical plan of the Armenian massacres was put into execution in April 24.

While these terrible news were spreading in Bulgaria and at the same time news were reaching of the first retreat from Van.

Leon Tutundjian unable to remain indifferent, discontent in his heart, he decides to leave to Caucasus and throw himself in the battle and share the life and the destiny of his people.

Tutundjian reaches Tiflis at the end of August 1915. At the Armenian voluntary headquarters he was informed of the elegy of Van. The fugitives of Van were infected with cholera, were dying by hundreds under the walls of Etchmiazine. In this uncertain & heart breaking situation, rumours were also circulating about dissolving of the volunteer army. It was expected the arrival of General Antranik to Tiflis, to reorganize his troop.

At that time Leon T. was working at the volunteers Headquarters, in the "Urgent office", where he assumes the responsibility of reorganizing of the statistical registrations books.



Meanwhile Antranik arrives to Tiflis from America, volunteers being arrived from Balcan, were ranged in the court of the Urgent Office waiting Antranik's arrival, hoping to be accepted in his regiment.

Antranik was that fabulous hero, for whom the Armenian population, sang for 35 years as the eagle of the Armenian mountains; but in sorrow & affliction of those days, they were trapping once again in his invincibility.

Leon T. who had taken an employment in the volunteers headquarters, One day, during his work, he catches the attention of the patrimonial hero, who invites him to his house. Thus between young Leon T. and General Antranik a friendship is established.

Leon T. service in Caucasus was not limited in the office work only. He was entrusted also the reorganization of the schools & orphanages. For that purpose he goes to Salmast and till Vladicaucasus. Then on the request of the chief physician of the cities, Tutundjian continues to render his services. Refugees had invaded Caucasus & were victims of the terrible cholera epidemic, which was extirpating every day the life of hundreds of them. Tutundjian did not hesitate to undertake the responsibility of striving against that horrible disaster and in Salmast having taken in charge the work he succeeded to save the life of hundreds. He also worked as superintendent and conciliator at the court of justice.

With his public activity Tutundjian continues his literary publicist work in Caucasus & his articles seen in many newspapers, like, Meshag, Vardosb. Ho



Haygashen and Hrazdan - +

February 1917 the Russian <sup>revolution</sup> breaks out. The Tzar is destituted, the Western Armenian refugees gathered in Caucasus find at last the liberty of reorganizing themselves; General Antranik undertakes the publishing of a news paper, the news paper was called "Hayasdan" and its first number appeared in 1917 May. The editorship was leaded by well known writer Vahan Totoventz and Leon Tutundjian. Antranik has undertaken the publishing of the paper Hayasdan, in order to protect the western Armenian refugees rights & their point of views, and thus the the Hayasdan news paper's office becomes the headquarter of the Western Armenians; In this headquarter it is formed the national Council of Western Armenians, which declares a roll-call and they entrust to general Antranik the commendement of the volunteers regiment. Leon Tutundjian was entrusted plenipotent to the Western Armenian mobilization by Antranik and leaves for Baku, to prosper there also, the work of the mobilization. Tutundjian's services around Armenia is almost ended. The events are precipitated in Caucasus, where there was nothing remained for Western Armenians to do.

1918 Armistice Tutundjian returns to Constantinople. He again consecrates himself to his cherished work, accepting the editorship of the paper "Voice of the People". At that time it was he who at the national Protectorate of Stamboul organized and for sometime directed the archives of the orphans; At the same time on the reorganization of the patriarchate he prepares based on the

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informations of the communities, the statistic report of those remained alive.

After the Kemalist victory, when American Near East Relief transferred 3000 orphans from our orphanage of Constantinople to Greece, Leon Tutundjian followed them, with Teodig, Arshag Boyadjian, Armenag Der Hagopian and other intellectuals and teachers. Most of these orphans settled in Corfu island, where for sometime Tutundjian continued the job of teacher.

Since 1922, Tutundjian begins to work regularly for different ~~national~~ papers. His articles are published in the "Voice of People" and Times in Constantinople; "Baykar" news paper, Annals, Almanachs in Boston; "Futur" in Paris; "The world" in Greece; "New day" in California; "Azer" in Egypt; "Euphrate" in Alep; 1937-1938 he leads the editorship of "Zartong" news paper Beirut, in contributing greatly to its foundation. In 1948 he leads the editorship of "Baycar" news paper in Boston. Beside this Tutundjian fulfills the role of delegate at the league of Nations, for the dispersed national papers: -

Leaving his home and comfort, Tutundjian was everywhere; he was earnest to help a little everybody, offering his experience, knowledge, noble and unreserved support to all Armenian papers, where his help was needed. -

From Caucasus to U. S. A. contrary to his endless tours, Tutundjian was not only loyal, unfatigable and uncompromising striver for the Armenian interest and the preservation of the nation, but in meantime he consecrated himself to the works of Literature and Arts.

\* Teheyani's    \*\* Teheyani's

Complete works of Teheyani published in Cairo (1949-1950)



Leon Tutundjian has about 20 vibrating with emotion and personal narrations, written in clear and fluent style, mostly taken from our national life and peripetia; All these writings are dispersed in news papers & reviews. These works where Tutundjian has put all his soul, ideas and convictions, which represents his and the Armenians life with their ups and downs, hopes and disappointments, sometimes bright and very often tenebrous, are scattered like the Armenians, in the pages of the press all over the world. He has also written notes and studies.

"Life in Caucasus during the days of terror", "Political attempt in Erivan"; Tashnagtzoutioun as government factor, "Notes from alarming years", "Plot against national hero Antranik", "Notes about Stepan Shahounian": - -

It is so pleasant to read Tutundjian's works, as much as it is pleasant to enjoy a work of art, whose greatest beauty is its being natural and simple.

On this occasion of Tutundjian's fiftieth jubilee, it will be an honour to us all and an equitable recompense to compass his works into volumes to recall them again to life, a thing which he has merited long time ago: Respect and honour to the venerable person who has fifty years of standing, and at present is among us, to whom we present our hearty & warmest congratulations and our best wishes:

At the end of the speech M<sup>r</sup> Hinayeghian recited "The song of the bread" by Taniel Varoujan, which is translated into French by M<sup>r</sup> Godel; He also read some of the works of the most respectable jubilate:

8/ The respectable Chairman ended the ceremony with sincere words of congratulations and good wishes, which were applauded for a long time. After the ceremony, a reception took place, during which all the present persons had the opportunity, in the cosy atmosphere, to make the acquaintance of the <sup>young</sup> old age jubilate and to express him their generous wishes and congratulations :- —

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